

For Immediate Release
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**GOVERNORS ISLAND ARTS PRESENTS ANNA VALDEZ'S
SPRING MIGRATION, A VIBRANT MURAL CONTEMPLATING
MOVEMENT AND TRANSFORMATION ON NEW YORK'S
FIRST PUBLIC HYBRID ELECTRIC FERRY**

Inspired by the Island's verdant natural spaces, the mural depicts the migration of birds alongside the transitions between the Island's inhabitants—from the Indigenous Lenape people to early settlers to military personnel—as the ferry in turn moves passengers to and from the Island

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Governors Island Arts, the public arts and cultural program presented by the **Trust for Governors Island**, debuts multidisciplinary artist **Anna Valdez's** vibrant, symbolically intricate ***Spring Migration***, the first mural commissioned specifically for a Governors Island Ferry. *Spring Migration* covers an exterior wall of the **Harbor Charger**, itself a major milestone as New York's first public hybrid electric ferry.

The mural explores the seasonal rhythms and transient histories of Governors Island. From the Indigenous Lenape people who utilized the land seasonally to the early settlers and generations of military personnel stationed here, the Island has been an ongoing site of transition. Like the birds that visit each spring, these inhabitants have played vital roles in the Island's history and legacy before moving on.

Valdez employs illustrations of birds including the non-migratory Peregrine Falcon and the migratory Baltimore Oriole, Orchard Oriole, and Magnolia Warbler, chosen for their beauty, endurance, and environmental impacts. The Peregrine Falcon stands as a symbolic guardian of this ecosystem. Once nearly extinct in the state of New York, its re-arrival feels, says Valdez, "like a mirror of the Island's own rebirth, from a restricted military base to a thriving green space used by visitors as a place of respite as well as a cultural hub."

The birds are set against digitally manipulated photographs of Governors Island’s landscapes and botanical details, inviting viewers across New York Harbor to practice the act of looking closely, beckoning them to find the extraordinary details within ephemeral space. As Valdez describes, she used “both macro and micro elements in the piece to capture a viewer’s attention both near or far. Viewers close to the piece should feel the lush abstraction found within the variety of greens and yellows pulling in the Island’s botany. Each bird is sized for maximum impact”—with one wing spanning more than 20 feet long.

Says Valdez, “While the Island holds dense layers of human history, its accentuation of nature has been a constant anchor. Creating this mural began as most of my works typically do. I began by pulling from my reference drawings, photographs, historical documents, and found objects into a format that communicates an abstract temporality. I also decided to lean into the role of a ferry as a liminal space bridging land, sea, and sky. I see my artwork transforming the vessel into a floating island, opening a portal to the destination before the passenger arrives. Ultimately, *Spring Migration* functions as a representation of the social, artistic, geographic narratives to be found on the Island.”

Governors Island Arts has consistently programmed transformative public artworks that directly engage with the Harbor and waterfront, and *Spring Migration* now expands the Island’s artistic reach beyond its shores, bringing a thoughtful, eye-opening consideration of migration to the journey that connects people to it. *Spring Migration* is a rich centerpiece statement in a season of work that meditates on the theme of movement, exploring the Island as a site of arrival, departure, and continual transformation.

Spring Migration will be on view on the Harbor Charger through 2027, and joins the Governors Island Arts’ diverse ecosystem of public art on display throughout the Island’s open space that includes works by **Sheila Berger, Chakaia Booker, Mark Dion, Mark Handforth, Shantell Martin, Duke Riley, Sam Van Aken, and Rachel Whiteread.**

About Anna Valdez

Anna Valdez is a multi-disciplinary artist who examines the relationship between objects, cultural formation, and collective consciousness. Creating an epic tableaux in her studio, Valdez moves seamlessly between still life and landscape painting as she collects objects and makes new ones—throwing, firing, and glazing new ceramic vessels inspired by ideas for paintings, new plants or taxidermy, recent trips, or works in progress. Toggling between collection, creation, observation, and fictionalization, Valdez works with saturated hues and surprising scale shifts to communicate an abstract temporality. Layering the personal with the historical in

dense compositions that collapse foreground and background, Valdez's compositions resemble immersive installations.

Valdez (b. 1985, California, United States) received her BA in Anthropology and Art from University of California, Davis in 2009 and her MFA in painting from Boston University in 2013. Her work has been exhibited nationally at venues including Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, AR; North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh, the Contemporary Art Museum in Raleigh, and Asheville Art Museum, in Asheville, NC; New Britain Museum of American Art in New Britain, CT; Hashimoto Contemporary in San Francisco, CA and New York City, NY; David B. Smith Gallery in Denver, CO; and OCHI in Sun Valley, ID and Los Angeles, CA. Valdez's work has been featured in publications including The New York Times, Juxtapoz Magazine, New American Paintings, Artsy, and Artillery Magazine. Her work is included in various private and public collections including the New Britain Museum of American Art in New Britain, Connecticut, The Columbus Museum in Columbus, Georgia, American Museum of Ceramic Arts in Pomona, CA, Xiao Museum in China, the Phyllis & Ross Escalette Permanent Collection of Art at Chapman University in Orange, CA, the Microsoft Art Collection in Seattle, WA, and Aritzia in Toronto, Canada. Valdez currently lives and works in Los Angeles, CA and Sacramento, CA.

Website: <https://www.annavaldez.com/>

Instagram: [@missannavaldez](https://www.instagram.com/missannavaldez)

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About Governors Island Arts

Governors Island Arts, the public arts and cultural program presented by the Trust for Governors Island, creates transformative encounters with art for all New Yorkers, inviting artists and researchers to engage with the issues of our time in the context of the Island's layered histories, environments, and architecture. Governors Island Arts achieves this mission through temporary and long-term public art installations and exhibitions, an annual Organizations in Residence program in the Island's historic houses, and the curated multidisciplinary INTERVENTIONS performance series. Learn more at www.govisland.org/arts.

Press Contact

Blake Zidell and Caitlyn Tella at Blake Zidell & Associates: blake@blakezidell.com,
caitlyn@blakezidell.com, 917.572.2593.